



Karnataka's only English International
Journal on music and dance

Gunagrahi



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Second Varshikotsava - 2000

GUNAGRAHI CELEBRATES FIRST VARSHIKOTSAVA

Gunagrahi, Journal of Music and Dance, launched last year, is celebrating the first Varshikotsava on Sunday 5th December 1999 at 10 A.M. under the joint auspices of The Bangalore Gayana Samaja at the Sangha auditorium.

Prof. B.K. Channashekar, Hon'ble Minister of State for Information and Publicity, Govt. of Karnataka is releasing the Special volume of *Gunagrahi* published on the occasion. Sangeetha Kalarajin, Sri R.K. Srikantan will preside. Sangeetha Kaliranjina Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao and Sri. H. Kamalanath will be Chief Guests.

The Special volume is devoted to articles on Karnatic and Hindustani music and dance. Smt. Maya Rao, Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao, Dr. Ravi Sathyanarayana, Sri T.S. Pantharath, Sri D.H. Harandra and Sri. Leela Ramanathan are among the contributors. The volume will contain its other regular features also.

Led by Justice M.F. Saldhana and Sri. A.R. Chandrashekar Gupta on June 17, 1998, *Gunagrahi*, published monthly in English, aims to focus its attention to encourage music and dance artists in general and specially from Karnataka. With a network of correspondents from Bombay, Chennai and Calcutta and International correspondents from USA, UK, Malaysia, Singapore, facilities of internet with e-mail etc., *Gunagrahi* is endeavouring to globally cover the cultural activities. It has on its advisory panel a large number of eminent personalities in music and dance.

Special Issue

HINDU, Monday, January 3, 2000 5

FORE/LIFE
30-4-2000
Gunagrahi to
go to the
the



"Surya Prasad and our meeting
there is an incredible interlude of 15
s. Let me explain. I was looking for a
music writer; I turned to my friend, Mr.
K. Padmanabha, who, in these years has

obscurity to stardom; he was
imminent Dr. Surya Prasad. You
him as *The Hindu* music critic
e. What occasioned our
the forthcoming anniversary of
d's baby, *Gunagrahi*, a journal
music and dance which made
June 1998 without fanfare. It
ing editorial panel and, as its
enthusiastic support of both
s and critics in the twin
arts. Needless to say,
is its watchword.

and dance are unique among the
ter works in a studio, so does a
ey enjoy the luxury of privacy
e when they may bring their
public viewing. Like the poet,
so inclined, reject a work if
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fection. This advantage is
ne musician and the dancer.

Prasad was sore that the twin
arts did not have a journal to
achievements and aspirations.
is the arrival of *Gunagrahi*. In
you hear, its readership is on
a PC is one of its assets; more
that *Gunagrahi* is now
n Internet and hotmail; that
aim to a global presence

With Best complements from:

Ranjani Ganeshan

(Dancer, choreographer and Guru)

PONNAMBALAM

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COVER PAGE:

Justice Nittur Srinivasa Rao realeasing the Special
Issue of Gunagrahi on the 1st Varshikotsava 1999

Inside

Calender of Events	2
From the Editor General	3
Nrithya and Yoga	4
The Future of Indian Arts	6
Budding Vidwans	7
Cassette Review	9
What Ails Karnatak Music	10
Review	12
Quiz of Fine Arts	15
Responsibilities of Artistes	16
Women in Thyagaraja's Compositions	17
From Abroad	20
Gunagrahi India	24

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Dr. A.H. Rama Rao & Sudha Rao Page

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

BANGALORE:

Dr.A.H.Ramarao-Sudha R.Rao Charitable Trust and Bangalore Lalithakala Parishath: Dr.H.N. Kalakshetra, Vaishakhotsava: June 19, 6.30 P.M. Veena Vaibhava by Dr. Suma Sudheendra. June 20, 6.30 P.M. Rathnamala Prakash (Sugama Sangeetha), June 21 Vidyabhushana (vocal). June 22 Lakshapati Rajana Kathe (drama). June 23 Panchali Shapatham (dance drama by Urmila Satyanarayana)

Karnataka Haridasa Scientific Research Centre: Vijaya Ranga Hall, Vijayanagar Market: Vijnana Vijayanthi-2000: June 30, 6.30 P.M.: T a b a s s u m Islam (Hindusthani vocal), 7.15 P.M. Deepa Nataraj (Karnatak vocal). July 1, 6.30 P.M. Prakash Kumar Chakravarthy (flute). 7.15

P.M. N.Rohini (Bharatanatyam). July 2, 6.30 P.M. "Kala Sangam" variety programme; directed by Subraya Bhat.

Sri Thyagaraja Gana Sabha and Sri Mookambika Talavadya Sangeetha Kalashaale: Vani Vidya Kendra, Rajajinagar II stage: June 16, 4 P.M. Jayalakshmi Srinivasan (vocal).

Bangalore Gayana Samaja, June 18, 4.15 P.M. T.S.Rama (vocal). June 25, Trichur V. Ramachandran (vocal).

Ananya: June 15, 6.30 P.M. G.Rajanarayan (Venu) and Radhika Rajanarayan (Veena).

Malleswaram Sangeetha Sabha, Gokhale Institute of Public Affairs, Malleswara: June 18, 4.15 P.M. S h u b h a s h r e e Ramachandran (vocal). June

25 C.B. Ramanarayan (vocal).

BTM Cultural Academy, Sri Ramana Maharishi Academy for the Blind: June 24, 5.30 P.M. Padmavathy Ananthagopalan and R.Jayanthi (Veena duet).

Natya Samarpana: Dr.Ambedkar Hall, Millers Road, June 17, 6.15 P.M. Rangapravesha by Kumari Vrinda, a disciple of Nirupama Rajendra of Abhinava Arts Centre.

MYSORE:

Gana Bharathi, Veene Seshanna Bhavana: June 25, 6 P.M. Hamsini N. (vocal).

Avadhoota Datta Peetham, Datta Nagar: 58th birthday celebrations of Sri Ganapathi Sachchidananda Swamiji: (11th June to 18th): June 18, Presentation of Awards. 6 P.M. Music for meditation and healing by Sri Swamiji.

PALLAVOTHSAVA-2000

(16th to 20th Sept)

Vasundhara Performing Arts Centre, No.1, West Cross Ashoka Road, Mysore-570 001, will be conducting the 15th National level classical dance and music festival for the young between the age group of 15—30 from 16 to 20th Sept., at Jaganmohana Palace auditorium, Mysore. Interested artistes may apply to Dr.Vasundhara Doreswamy at the above address with their bio-data and three photos on or before 5th July 2000. The selected artistes would be provided with local hospitality and a respectable honorarium as fixed by the Centre.



From the Editor General



TWO YEAR YOUNG "GUNAGRAHI"

It is thrilling to note that "GUNAGRAHI" is two years old now. The very launching of the journal was a significant one. The aims and objectives with which it was launched have been fulfilled to a maximum extent. The focus laid on Karnataka artistes and art forms, in particular, has yielded rich dividends. The beneficiaries have gracefully acknowledged the role played by "GUNAGRAHI" in their success.

Now, it is a happy thing to place on records that the journal could overcome some unavoidable and unforeseen hurdles in its publication.

Thanks to Mr.V.Krishnan, General Manager, ITI, it can boast of its own well equipped PC. He has been an inspiring force.

The popular philanthropist-couple and Trustess of Sri Ramasudha Charitable Trust Dr.A.H.Rama Rao and his wife Smt.Sudha Rao have been gracious enough in sponsoring the issues of "GUNAGRAHI".

My dear friend Mr.S.K.Lakshminarayana(Babu) of Mysore has always been an inspiring spirit behind me. He has been helping the journal in building up its corpus fund.

Now that another feather is being added in the form of launching of a trust called "GUNAGRAHI INDIA", "GUNAGRAHI" pledges to fulfil the ambitions of the artistes, organisers, rasikas and connoisseurs of classical music and dance in the most befitting manner. It will act as a bridge and communicator between the artistes and other agencies.

You, the artistes, the readers, the sponsors, the Government agencies, the organisers and the lovers of music and dance are the backbone of this journal. You can get the things done, as wished by you, through this powerful forum. Your cooperation, support and guidance is always honoured by us.

Feel free to write to us and/or interact with us.

"GUNAGRAHI" is available on the net.

The address is: gunagrahi@yahoo.com and drsuryaprasad@joymail.com.

-Karnataka Kala Sri DR.M. SURYA PRASAD.

Nrithya and Yoga - An Integrated Perspective

[A disturbed mind cannot accomplish varied Satvik emotions, so effectively. The human nature, the world's attitudes to life, its desires and ambitions, attachments and aversions are the ingredients of the satvikaabhinaya. Directors of "Sadhana Sangama", Dancer-Guru JYOTHI and her Yoga-expert husband PATTABHIRAM explain and illustrate]



The entire universe is a harmonious manifestation of energy—the ever expanding Supreme consciousness. Each and every act in this universe is nothing but a rhythmic dancing phenomenon of that Supreme consciousness. Man is verily the Supreme creation and the expression of that energy and dynamism. The very purpose of his living is, to experience that rhythmic joy and express that *BLISS* in its totality.

Since the dawn of humanity, man has been exploring the very purpose, the message and the meaning of life. He, considering himself a laboratory, has been conducting various experiments to unveil the curtain of mystery between him and the very source of his existence. In this spiritual explorative passage of Indian history, many Rishis, the great seers and scientists by themselves, arrived at one understanding that Man is *SAT-CHIT-ANANDA* i.e., Absolute Reality, Absolute Consciousness and Absolute Bliss. They have proclaimed this very truth with pristine clarity in our ancient scriptures. The Taittareeya

Upanishad declares, Man is "*Raso Vai Saha: Rasam Hi Evahi Labdhva Anandee Bhavati*", i.e., "You are happiness itself: one who returns to this true abode of His shall always be happy." In fact, this *Rasa* can be interpreted as "*Ramate samyak roopena*", experiencing the joy of that whole.

In this explorative journey, such great truth-seekers like Bharata Muni and Maharshi Patanjali codified the philosophy and practices in the hours of their inspired and intuitive heights, in the form of texts. *Natya Shastra* of Bharata Muni and Patanjali Maharishi's *Patanjali Yogadarshana*, both convey the same truth in two different perspectives and parlance.

Our ancients have attributed a pinnacle positions of sanctity to *Natya* as the "*Panchama Veda*", i.e., the fifth veda the sacred scripture: and Lord Nataraja being the presiding deity of dance, speaks volumes about the spiritual dimension of *Natya*. Indeed, *Natya* is a path of worship and a state of accomplishment in spiritual truth.

Thus, *Ananda* or its other facet *Shanta* is the base of all life: and the life-activities springing from this source of Bliss shall always be holistic.

Because, it is untainted, spontaneous, creative and has the very fragrance of human existence, untouched by man's thoughts and deeds. Hence, it is sacred too.

The bedrock or "*Sthayi*" of *Navarasas* in *Natya* is *Shanta*—the ninth *rasa* while in *Yoga*, it is *Ananda* or supreme joy. When the *Ashtarasas* get dissolved in the last *Shanta rasa*, an individual realises the state of Bliss—"Sat-Chit-Ananda" the untainted joy. The sublime goal of *Natya* and *Yoga* is to attain this state.

Man is what the Mind is—"Manah yeven *Manushyaanaam*", when the mind is filled with impurities, i.e., *Pancha Kleshaas*, as envisaged by Maharshi Patanjali viz, *Avidya*—Ignorance, the fertile ground on which, *Asmita*—Ego, emerges as the false image of oneself, in interactions with other three *Kleshaas* or afflictions called *Dwesha*—the aversion, *Raga*—the attachment and *Abhinivesha*—fear of death, insecurity, loveliness, anxiety and so on. Due to these impurities in the individual self, all actions and responses with the external world result in frustrations and dejections. Hence, Patanjali defines *Yoga* as follows: "*Citta vritti nirodah*"—the complete stoppage of all functional

modulations springing from the store house called *Citta* or mind. When the self frees from all such impurities, becomes transparent and pure, the true personality emerges. This is what Patanjali means by saying "*Tada drustuhu swarupe Avasthaanam*". Then, in that pure being state, all expressions shall be filled with joy, shining with cosmic intelligence.

Bharatha Muni's parlance of Natya is also advocated on similar lines. He says "*Samaahita Manastvaath, Manah samaadhaanaa cha satva nishpattiredhyate*" i.e., only when the individual self stays in a serene state of being, the satvik emotions are aroused, which is the real essence of Chaturvidha Abhinaya. A disturbed mind cannot accomplish varied Satvik emotions, so effectively. The human nature, the world's attitudes to life, its desires and ambitions, attachments and aversions are the ingredients of the satvikaabhinaya. Bharata says, "*Yoyam svabhaave, lokasya, sukha-dukha samanvitah syomgaabhinaya pete natyam ithi abhideeyate*" which means the human joys and sorrows, agony and death, successes and failures—such mental afflictions imitated

on stage i.e., "*Avasthaanukrithi*"—is itself Natya. When an individual enacts these emotions of ordinary life, they are transformed into an aesthetic

The ultimate goal of Natya and Yoga sadhana is to purify these five sheaths of human existence and integrate the body-mind-soul to accomplish a harmonious



experience. Such emotions do not bind the personality but played and enacted. Then only, Patanjali's "*Tada Drustuhu swarupe Avasthaanam*" takes place in an individual in which the sense of "I" is annihilated completely.

A better understanding of these paths of Sadhana—both Nrithya and Yoga can be had from the "Panchakosha Viveka" model of Taittareeya Upanishad.

The human personality is made up of five sheaths of existence: (1) Annamaya Kosha—the physical body, (2) Praanamaya Kosha—the vital body, (3) Manonmaya Kosha—the astral sheath, (4) Vijnaanamaya Kosha—the intellect and (5) Anandamaya Kosha—the state of bliss.

holistic personality.

Natya achieves this goal of self-purification and self-realisation through the Chaturvidha Abhinaya—Aangika, Vaachika, Aahaarya and Satvika. The same is accomplished in Yoga by way of "Asthaanga Yogaanga" practice—(1) Yama, (2) Niyama (3) Asana, (4) Praanayama, (5) Pratyahara, (6) Dhaarana, (7) Dhyana and (8) Samaadhi.

Both the paths of Sadhana reach the individual self towards that "Light" and remove the dark veil of Ignorance, releasing the clutches of mental afflictions and accomplish Self-realisation. Paths may appear different. "*Eko sat vipraaha bahudaha vadante*".

With Best complements from:

Vidwan H.S.Nagaraj



Guruguha Gana Sabha

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THE FUTURE OF INDIAN CLASSICAL ARTS

Music and dance have always ennobled and enriched human life and particularly so in our country, where in the words of Bharatha they have "enlightened the Man through entertainment."

Ancient Indian aesthetics have placed a distinct emphasis on the artiste being the subjective experiencer expressing himself in a highly detached and objective fashion. He meditates upon his experience and is able to give form to the formless. Thus the role of art is multiple—it is a means of self-expression, a record of the experiences of the artiste, a form of communication satisfying man's need to be part of a group, a way of searching for and understanding the virtues of life.

To go back a little in time to the third quarter of the last century when a great renaissance of our performing arts took place, heralded by some of our great intellectuals who inspired by patriotic fervour, made successful attempts to bring back our dance, drama and music not back to the temple which had hitherto been the focal points of our culture—but to the theatre which was based on Western models.

Dance thus ceased to be a temple and palace art and became a theatre art meant for the entertainment of the many as opposed to the select-few. Inevitably both dance and music ceased to be the monopoly of temple and court dancers and became arts

which could be practised by artistes and dancers from all strata of society.

Another important factor to be considered here, is the replacement of the personal patronage of the Maharajas by the impersonal one of Government dispersed through its various academies and departments. Naturally there have been a number of changes in the format and objectives of classical arts ranging from the good to the absurd. These changes are to be seen both in the methodology of techniques and presentation and like all changes some are for the better and some for the worse. There has also been a change in the mental attitudes of the artiste. He or she has become highly subjective, no longer believing in the objectivity of presentation or attempts to project spiritedly with the result that the art forms have become intensely personalised expression of the artiste.

What is the future of classical dance in our country going to be? This is very hard to visualise in view of the almost hourly changes that are taking place in the various fields of knowledge, particularly in those of science and technology.

One trend which is obvious is that dancing is becoming a group effort and group performances and dance-dramas are becoming popular with a plethora of characters participating and with as many dancers performing as

the stage can hold and with combined choreographic presentations of a number of Gurus being presented. This may lead to permanent troupes being maintained by the Government in future.

Another trend is the realisation that apart from depicting myths and legends centred around Gods and Goddesses dancing could be used to express contemporary life and its problems. Here, one must digress and point out that a thought should be given to the total alienation that has occurred between classical art forms appreciated by urbanites and rural art forms that are appreciated by the villager and which however are slowly being replaced by cinema music and dance.

As a consequence of the above trends, musical and dance styles are becoming hybridised and totally mixed up. Will this lead to the creation of common or national style of dancing similar to the Bharatanatya prevailed in the country before the tenth century A.D? Will it become a "World Style"?

However, being an incurable optimist, one feels that art has a way of its own—the way of life and has got to grow along with the civilization of its time and not independently. I am confident that the strong roots of our culture and the versatility of the Indian artistic genius will produce suitable art, which will more than adequately satisfy the needs of all times.

— Dr. M. S.P.

BUDDING VIDWANS AND BLOOMING VIDUSHIS

-- By Kusuma Rao

The present day musical scene gives an encouraging picture of Karnatak classical music. In any Gana Sabha, a time-slot is reserved to promote young talent. There are many youngsters eager to learn music these days. School and college going students make time to fit in a little music with their busy study-schedule. This is a very heart-warming trend and deserves all encouragement. Because music not only cuts across communities and language barriers but across generations too!

Today's youngsters are earnest in their approach. In the racy, competitive world that we live these days, performance and results are considered far more important than mere pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowledge. It is not Art for Art's sake any longer; it is Art for the sake of name, fame and new, crisp currency notes. The young ones are so eager to perform (give concerts, nothing less) that the actual learning takes secondary place (if not a back seat). Those days when the shishya learnt in the Gurukula Vasa spent years in perfecting fundamentals, before venturing into the concert-arena are over. Today, the shishya goes to a Guru as

much to learn as to perform as early as possible. He receives training in the concert-craft, learns a few krithis and is ready to mount the stage. The parents/guardians are equally eager and interested in seeing that their wards get an early chance to perform. And they spare no efforts in this direction.

Ofcourse, youth is the best time of one's life and it is also the best time to learn. We are young only once and the capacity to learn is at its best in youth. And it is charming to see very young musicians sitting like stalwarts and performing. I have myself attended many concerts by upcoming artistes and their dedication and involvement is to be seen to be believed.

And this performing business is a two way process. As the young artistes perform, they also learn to give and take. They become mature and appreciate the fact that is the combined effort of the main performer and the co-artistes that makes a concert (however mini or maxi) successful. Just like in sports and games, a competitive spirit is a healthy trend. They also learn from their mistakes. There is thus enough scope for improved performance in future.

Overcoming stage-

freight in the early years is a great step towards achieving success. One cannot sit at home and learn to become bold. Speaking, singing or playing in public can be learnt only outside the four walls of the house. Only then, is there a chance for the budding vidwans and blooming vidushis to build up confidence which is a vital necessity to any performer.

A big advantage that these early blossoms in classical music have is they are considered definitely a little higher in the social scale than their classmates who while away their spare time watching TV. This knowledge that they are making the best use of their time helps also in boosting their self-image. In any group of boys and girls, a talented one who can sing or play is at an advantage over the others who cannot. Such a person is enviable. This social image should help the budding geniuses to develop into better human beings and citizens of the world in the long run.

The invasion of TV

The invasion of TV into our lives and the way it has been eating into the roots of our culture is alarming. Imagine a world with no classical music, no steady

tonic notes of the SA PA SA swaras, our ever-soothing devaranamas but a world with much shooting and destruction, bang bang booming guns, artificial TV talks and deafening noise? What would life be like? We would all go mad!

While no one underestimates the importance of instant communication, of having the world's happenings at our finger-tips, it should not become a monster that threatens to consume our very existence. The mindless tele-viewing of sex and violences bodes no good to anybody, least of all youngsters. On the contrary, it excites the younger generation to take to unwanted things. There should be a limit to the amount of exposure of TV-culture the youngsters are allowed, so that they have time—precious time—to do other useful things in life—such as learn music. Music has the power to soothe, heal, comfort and bring joy to those who come into contact with it—be it a singer, player or a listener. It also helps the

youngsters earn name, fame and money eventually.

This is something I have noticed—that many youngsters, although they become qualified in a professional course, prefer to practise music than, say medicine. Music at the best of times, all other things being equal, is not a very lucrative business. In order to make a livelihood, they have to pursue a career—as a doctor, dentist, engineer, software-consultant or whatever, but they like to keep music alongside so that it gives them something to hold on to, like a friend's hand in the dark. As it does them good and makes them feel good, parallel pursuit of music is the prevalent trend.

Let the youngsters learn to separate the good from bad in their learning process. There are many laudable things they can emulate from their sisters and brothers in the West. Let them learn qualities like punctuality, neatness and tidiness in personal things, good manners, cleanliness, doing one's work by oneself,

doing whatever we do well, following the rules of the road, helping the elderly cross the road, lending a hand at household chore—there are hundreds of things. Let the West learn from us our good and great things, such as our music, culture etc.

I have a few suggestions for the budding vidwans and blooming vidushis:

Learn to understand the meaning and context (story or legend) of the songs they sing—as songs come in all languages. It helps them put more feeling into their music. Try to enunciate the words properly in the correct way without corrupting the meaning. Give attention to hrasv-deergha swaras, alpa-maa praanaas. Pay particular attention to shruti. Practise with shruti box "on" for a while, "off" for a while and repeat it. Avoid making faces while singing. Twisting and contorting features are ugly and unnecessary. The effort should be invisible. To achieve this, practise daily before a good mirror, so that you can see yourself.

With best complements from:

SANGEETHA KRIPA KUTEERA,

39, 5th Main, 4th Block, Thyagarajanagar,
BANGALORE-560 028.

CASSETTE REVIEW:



Laya Vinyasa:
percussion ensemble: PAC
audio: Percussive Arts
Centre, 18th cross, 2nd
block, Jayanagar,
Bangalore-560011.
Price: Rs.40/-.

This is a rare cassette of percussion ensemble comprising besides the conventional Karnatak percussive instruments like mridanga, khanjari, ghata, morsing, konagolu, the Hindusthani percussions Pakhwaj, open air instrument dolu and rhythm Pad are also used to highlight the infrequent eleven counts time gait and khanda chapu. The artistes featured in this cassette under the direction of Bangalore K.Venkataram are A.V.Anand(mridanga), H.P. Ramachar(khanjari), R.A.Rajagopalan(ghata), H.S.Sudheendra(mridanga), B.Rajasekhar (morsing), B.C.Manjunath(konagolu), Anur Ananthakrishna Sharma(dolu) and B.S.Arun Kumar(rhythm Pad).

Side A of the cassette features the delineation of mishra tripura tala(11 counts) comprising one laghu(seven aksharas) and two dhrutas(each two aksharas). The prominent konagolu at the very outset is attractive. The

exposition is marked by artistic permutation and combinations of the tala. The ensemble seemed to have worked out a well thought plan and the percussionists have done their best in their respective roles. The moharas, the teermanas et al, including sarvalaghu patterns are not enjoyable but also make up for a solid composition of the tala. The time sense is immaculate. There is clarity in the play of instruments.

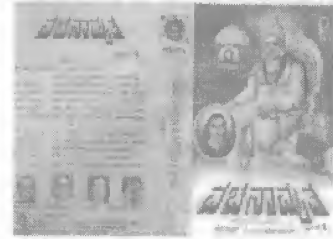
Side B has the delineation of khanda chapu(2+3). In this rhythmic exercise too, the artistes show their mettle. The patterns woven into the tala are enticing. There are artistic pauses which add to the variety. The teermana is worked out with lot of details incorporated into it.

Lot of care has been taken in making it a lively affair. A short and sweet approach has been fetching. As a result of which the entire rendition does not sound boring or dry. The separations between the instruments lend variety to the presentations.

Vachanamrita—part I Digital N 001, Sri Datta Sangeetha Vidyalaya, 92, I Floor, 8th cross, Wilson Gardens, Bangalore-560 027. Price Rs.35/-. Side A: "Kulavendu horaduva"(by Siddharama), "Amrita Sagara" (Allamaprabhu), "Guru charanava" (Shanmukha Shivayogi), "Aasage sattidu" (Allamaprabhu), "Ile n i m m a d a a n a" (Devaradaasimayya) and

"Mande maasideare" (Chennabasavanna). Side B: "Kariyanjuvudu" (Basavanna), "Sajjaneyaagi" (Akkamahadevi), "Gali hadadalli" (Ambigarachowdaiah), "Mruduvachanave" (Basavanna) and "Kariyanittade olle" (Devaradaasimayya).

This is a collection of vachanas by different Shiva sharanas. The select 11-



vachanas (six on Side A and five on Side B) are set to music and sung by Pandit V.M.Nagaraj, a singer of merit and also the principal of Sri Datta Sangeetha Vidyalaya. The above vachanas are tuned in Bihag, Poorvi, Gorakh Kalyan, Madhuvanthi, Bageshri, Yaman Kalyani in madhyama shruti, Yaman, Khamach, Bhatiyar and Bhoopali ragas respectively. All these Hindusthani ragas suit well to the mood the respective vachanas.

A team of skilful singers led by V.M.Nagaraj had done extremely well in presenting the vachanas. The other singers Archana Udapa, Nanditha and Anasuyadevi have done justice to their assignment. The clarity of text with which the compositions are sung needs a pat. Likewise the mood of the ragas is aptly kept in tact and sing melodiously. - DR.M.S.P.

WHAT AILS KARNATAK MUSIC TODAY

An unusual and disturbing situation has become all pervasive at public performances of music — the universal preponderance of 'oft-repeated' songs combined with dilution of classicism. This unhealthy state of affairs tends to make all music listening safe and unadventurous since established ideals of accepted masters are conveniently forgotten. Filling our hails with familiar sounds induces a sense of security in our audiences. Over and over again, the same limited number of bona fide guaranteed master pieces are on display. By inference therefore, it is mainly these works that are worth our notice. At this rate, sooner or later our masterpieces are certain to dry up. The final irony is that the people who are persuaded to concern themselves only with the best in music are the very same ones who would have most difficulty in recognising a real masterpiece when they hear one.

It is both exhilarating and depressing to think of this scenario, exhilarating to think that great masses of people are put in contact daily with them and have the possibility of truly making sustenance from them, and depressing to watch these same classics used to snuff out all liveliness. Reverence to modern (contemporary) music has been turned into a form of discrimination against the music of the past masters. The public is now frightened of investing in any music that is

not contemporary.

The simple truth is that our concert hails have been turned into musical museums — auditory museums of a most limited kind. Our musical era is sick in that respect. Our 'invalid' artistes exist on the fringe of musical society and our listeners are impoverished through a relentless repetition of the same works signed by a handful of sanctified names.

As a simple example, by fixing his eyes on details, the contemporary artiste has become more and more incapable of appreciating these details taking into consideration its organic relation with the musical whole. This is the reason why the performers today are worse than those of, say, 50 years ago. Current performance is like a measuring rod, like a barometer, which indicates the spirit of the age. The quality of the performance usually determines the quality of the audience and vice versa. Today the audience is supplied with the music it deserves and not what it should have. In this sense, the performer is not to be blamed.

As for rhythm, harmony, instrumentation and execution of details, the demand made upon the performer today will be more exacting than it was in the past.

Witness the completely ignorant way in which classical masterpieces are performed today. There is also utter

confusion amongst the public as far as the problem is concerned. People simply do not know what to look for. They talk about the strict adherence to Sampradaya, yet listen in silence or actually applaud when the most incredible liberties are taken with it. The spiritual problem with which the great masterpieces are in fact concerned, have long since been relegated to oblivion.

Today's artiste lives in a cocoon. He has brainwashed the recent generation of music lovers and persuaded him not to think beyond a point. He does not allow the listener to fallback upon his own gift, his own analysis, judgment and imagination. The artiste does not question the listener — were you absorbed in the music? He is oblivious to the truth that a master work awakens in us reactions of spiritual order that are already in us waiting to be aroused. A concert is not a sermon: it is a performance — a reincarnation of a series of ideas implicit in the work of art. A healthy musical curiosity and broad musical experience sharpen the critical faculty of even the most talented amateur.

An artiste is no longer simply a craftsman. He is a musical thinker, a creator of values, values which are primarily aesthetic, hence psychological and ultimately of the deepest human importance. To participate in a concert presumes a

minimum kind of professionalism.

Everything connected purely with problems of technique and virtuosity is largely a matter of training. However, a tendency to practise excessively and to determine every little detail in advance will result in the art being deprived more and more of its essence and of its soul. Anybody who thinks it is possible to impart and develop the technique of a singer or an instrumental player in the absence of close and constant association with the art itself, in the face of which technique can only be a means, is very much mistaken. It is, however, a fact that technique exercises a hypnotic influence nowadays.

How many artistes have questioned how successfully they are communicating with an audience? One who cannot calculate in advance the effect of his piece on the listening public is in for some

rude awakening. Although a desire for communication may not be in the forefront of their minds, they should, however, be modest enough to realise that every move towards logic and coherence in performing is in fact a move towards communication. This is relevant in its meaning to the contemporary composer also.

What is the difference between tasteless exhilaration and an experience that is deeply moving. It is only a slim margin. If the expectations from the artiste are not much and if we were charitable minded. We laugh, if not charitably inclined. We denounce it. We want to rise up and call it a public lie. Facing a large and heterogeneous crowd. It is the performer who is deeply moved and without a shadow of embarrassment appeals to what is warmest, who really communicates with the audience and wins the loudest applause.

Nothing is as boring as merely well rehearsed concert in the sense that nothing can be expected to happen beyond what is studiously prepared in advance. In a situation like this, the artiste is performing a duty than a piece. Unless the music stirs the executant. It is unlikely to move an audience. Effortless singing or playing is one of the major joys of the music listening. It indicates a measure of mental confidence and a degree of physical assurance in the handling of the voice or the instrument.

Eventually the finest artiste cannot be easily pigeonholes. The reason we remain so alive to their qualities is just because, in each case we are forced to balance and adjust subtle gradations of the interpretative power. Every new artiste is a problem-child, a composite of virtues and defects that challenge the keenness and mind of the listener.

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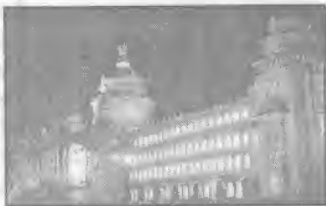
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REVIEW



BANGALORE BUZZ:

Excellent Nandini-Murali

Young Kathak-duo Nandini K.Mehta and K.Murali Mohan were in their artistic elements when they performed together at ADA Rangamandira. They heralded the opening of their school of dance with their lively performance. To enrich their duet the orchestral ensemble comprising Sangeetha Kulakarni(vocal), Parveen D.Rao(tabla), Yogesh (harmonium) and Srinivas (sitar) contributed well.

The recital began with a Nataraja stuti. Set to Bhairagi Bhairav (equivalent to Revathi of Carnatic music) and Puriya, the composition was explored exquisitely. There was cohesion in their movements. Though one felt that Nandini and Murali were a bit self-conscious, in the narration part, they gave a creditable account of themselves. The technical exposition of the jhap tal (10 beats) in the form of uthans, thas, aamads, tihais et al, was admirable. The duo covered the stage in artistic designs.

Nandini and Murali's abhinaya talents came to the

fore in the rendition of "Rasa barase" and a bhajan respectively. More expressive facials could have lent the number a special glow. The concluding Malkauns tarana was befitting.

Snehashri delights

Young S.Snehashri's Bharatanatyam under the EFCEP series at Yavanika did credit to her Guru B.Bhanumathi. Her recital took off with the Poorvaanga vidhi. This was rendered in strict conformation with the Mysore Style of Bharatanatyam and according to the tradition of Mysore Palace. Dikshitar's Gowla krithi "Sri Mahaganapatharavatumaam" set to mishra chapu tala and the shabda were notable for her abhinaya.

Though at the outset, she seemed a bit shaky, her delineation of the Bhairavi varna "Velanai vara cholladi" by K.Dandayudhapani Pillai addressed to Lord Subramanya was notable for sparkling, evocative teermanas and intelligent abhinaya. The attributes of a swaadheenapatita nayika were highlighted by her through her artistic abhinaya. Well built, fair, lissom, Snehashree has all the externals required for a dancer by its first codifier, Bharatamuni. She now has to learn to give to dance, in full, all that she has within her.

The varna was neat and expressive. All the post-varna items "Jagadodharana" by Purandaradasa, a javali de-



picting a mugdha nayika and the concluding Valachi tillana by Dwaraki Krishnaswamy came out in an impressive way. Guru B. Bhanumathi (nattuvanga), Jahnavi Jayaprakash (vocal), Narasimhamurthy (flute) and Narayanaswamy (mridanga) lent good support.

Taalavaadyotsava-2000

The five-day(May 27 to 31) 19th Taalavaadyotsava-2000 under the auspices of the Percussive Arts Centre at Shivaratrishwara Kendra, JSS Campus, Jayanagar VIII block began in a traditional manner. The "Palani Subramanya Pillai Award" donated by Dr.A.H. Rama Rao and Sudha Rao was presented to veteran mridangist P.G.Lakshminarayana of Mysore. This was followed by an erudite harmonium solo recital by Palladam Venkataramana Rao. Accompanied ably by Mysore V.Prashanth (violin), P.G.Lakshminarayana (mridanga) and G.S.Ramanujam(ghata) the veteran could highlight the niceties of Carnatic music on the keyed instrument.

Palladam held the show together with his expertise and vast experience. His imagination was fecund. He was able to translate his musical vision into reality.

The impressive recital had two landmarks in it. The exposition of Poorvikalyani (Gnanamosagarada) and Mohana (Bhavanuta) were pleasing to the ears.

Arunachalappa remembered:

The legendary harmonium player late Arunachalappa brought glory to Karnataka with his impeccable artistry. His birth centenary year was celebrated in a befitting manner by the Centre. A book on his life and achievement penned by B.M.Sundaram was released by N.Ramachadran of Indian Fine Arts Society, Madras.

Singer-scholar Dr.Radha Venkatachalam of Delhi gave an illuminating lecture-demonstration of raga, tana and pallavi under the direction of veteran vocalist Prof.T.R.Subramanyam. The rendition of RTP in Madhyamavathi in two-kalai trishratripude at 21/4 edduppu with trishra and trikala was a class by itself. The ragamalika comprising Hemavathi, Saramathi and Roopavathi ragas with ragamudra incorporated into it was captivating. The pallavi line "Paalimchu madhuvathi Shivayuvathi Madhyamavathi" in strotovahayati was dealt with all the interesting technicalities.

Young percussionist Anur Ananthakrishna Sharma was presented the "H.Puttachar memorial



award" (donated by khanjira vidwan H.P.Ramachar).

"Vadya Vaibhava", an instrumental ensemble comprising V.K. Raman (flute), Pushpa Kashinath (veena), Anur Ananthakrishna Sharma (mridanga), D.Srinivas (12-stringed guitar), B.S.Venugopalraju (tabla) and Arunkumar (rhythm pad) enthralled the audience with its well-rehearsed performance. Directed by AAK Sharma, various possibilities in exploring the varieties of the given rhythm, created a delightful experience.

A varna in Sri raga (Saami ninne), "Vatapi Ganapatim bhaje" (Hamsadhwani) and a short alapana of the raga by the venu and veena artistes, the krithis was crisply presented. The sahitya portions "Veeta raginam" and "Anaadi Guruguha" were catchy.

An orchestral composition by AAK Sharma in a scrumptious Saraswathi raga enabled the instrumentalists to negotiate the laya in admirable way. "Raghuvamsha sudhaambudhichandra" (Kadanakutoohala), Amritavarshini (another orchestral composition) and a raga, tana and pallavi in Shanmukhapriya left an

indelible mark in the minds of the lovers of music.

Karnatak music on Angklung

To vocalist Anasuya Kulkarni goes the credit of adapting an Indonesian bamboo instrument called Angklung to Karnatak music. Backed by Susharao (violin), B.N.Ramesh (mridanga) and S.Prashanth (khanjira), Anasuya gave a good account of herself in rendering "Vatapi", raga Nagaswaravali (Garudagamana), Jingla (Anathudanugani) and Amritavarshini (Sudhamayi) among others.

Radiant Ramamani

Ramamani, one of the best vocalists of Karnataka, proved that the sincerity of approach is the keyword of success for any musician. Ramamani's rich and resilient voice had an easy tri-sthayi range.

The choice of items was good and it showed that the singer was a seasoned performer. A varna in Reetigowla and "Gajananayutam" in Chakravaka, kept up the even tempo of the recital. Kanakangi for "Sri Kanakambaradhari", a composition by Bellari Seshagiriachar and Kedara for a rarely heard Dikshitar-krithi "Anandanatana prakasham" were moving.

GNB's "Ninnupo gadatarama", "Rara mayintidaka" (Asaveri), Andolika (Ragasudharasa) and Todi for "Daachukovalena" with the trikala negotiation were neat. Ramamani received a commendable

support from B.U.Ganeshprasad (violin), M.T.Rajakesari (mridanga) and R.A.Rajagopalan (ghata).

Violinist-brothers

Violinist-brothers Mysore M.Nagaraj and Mysore Dr.M. Manjunath excelled each other in the elaboration of Ranjani and Todi(raga, tana and pallavi in khanda tripude and khanda nadai). The melody was intact. Their manodharma was in tandem. There was professional elan in the rendition. Everything was wellplanned and well executed. The concert was enriched by A.V.Anand (mridanga) and M.A.Krishnamurthy(ghata).

Duet with a difference

Earlier, Kalavathi Avadhoot and H.Geetha sang to the accompaniment of the ensemble of the Percussive Arts Centre consisting of V.Krishna and H.S.Sudhindra (m r i d a n g a s) , R.Sathyakumar(ghata), A.V.Kashinath(dolu), B.S. Arun Kumar(rhythmpad) and A n n u r Ananthakrishnashama(direction). They rendered raga, tana and pallavi "Amba nannu brovave at vegame vachchi" in Janaranjini(1/2 edduppu) tagging it with a chain of ragas suffixed with Ranjini like Shivaranjini, Sriranjini and Sumarasharanjini.

Vibrant vocal

On the concluding day, the Palghat Mani Iyer Award was conferred on the veteran mridangist Ella Venkatesharao. The curtain came down with a vibrant vocal recital by Trichur V. Ramachandran. Supported by S.Seshagiri Rao (violin), Ella Venkatesharao (mridanga) Ramachandran enthralled the rasikas with his short and rich recital, Nata (Swaminatha paripalayamam) and Poorvikalyani (Meenakshi me mudam: Dikshitar with neraval and swaras), Hindola (Samaganalole) and Kambhoji (Evarimata) stood out for his seasoned artistry and concert-craft.

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S. K. Lakshminarayana (Babu) page

QUIZ OF FINE ARTS

krithi in this raga.

SOLUTIONS:

1. What is Natya Dharma?
2. Under what heading can it be studied?
3. What is Natya Dharmi?
4. Loka Dharmi is _____.
5. What is Nattuva Talam?
6. How is it used?
7. What is Natya Veda?
8. Gandharva Veda is _____.
9. What do you know about Malavi raga?
10. Mention the famous

1. The code of ethics to be observed during the performances of Natya.
2. It can be studied under four heads: (1) The Dharma pertaining to the Dancer. (2) The Dharma pertaining to the accompanying singers and instrumentalists. (3) The Dharma pertaining to the organisers. and (4) The Dharma pertaining to the audience.
3. Conventional representation of an object.
4. Realistic representation of the same.
5. The metallic cymbals used

by the nattuvanars or conductors of dances.

6. Of the pair of cymbals, one is of bronze and the other is of steel. The bronze disc is struck against the steel disc held in the left palm.
7. The Art of Dance. In order to establish the greatness of the art, it is elevated to the status of Veda.
8. Music.
9. It is a janya raga from the 28th mela Harikambhoji. It has sa ri ga ma pa ni ma da ni sa—sa ni da ma pa ma ga ma ri sa. Compositions begin on ga and dha.
10. Nenarunchinaanu.

PHOTO QUIZ

This is a rare photo of the last performance by the noted dancer-couple of Karnataka.

Identify them:



RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERFORMING ARTISTES

- by DR.M.BALAMURALIKRISHNA

[They would be working for the cause of music if they take proper interest in the upcoming musicians and constantly emphasise the need for strenuous practise and to develop a commitment to excellence.....observes the genius-vocalist.]



India's greatest asset is the deep veneration with which we hold our heroes who conquered not by the sword but by the spirit of love and goodness. Of these, our composers of music and performing artistes stand supreme. It is a matter of great pride and glory that unlike other arts which have suffered neglect and deterioration, music has progressively developed to enlighten and bless mankind. It is the responsibility of the present generation of musicians to keep up this great legacy and preserve it in its finest form. In this task, one may face a lot of hurdles, the foremost of these being one's own individual needs and attitude.

Pre-requisite

An important pre-requisite for good music is that it should be pleasing to the ear. This does not mean that purity of the art should be sacrificed for the sake of popularity. However, it should be remembered that no presentation will be considered worthy if it is bereft of power, beauty and effect. Quality does not mean mere following of

tradition. These aspects should be properly inculcated in the younger generation by the performing artistes. At the same time, they should not rest content by saying that the rising stars have better knowledge than those of the previous generation but lack the quality of involvement of devotion. On the other hand, they would be working for the cause of music if they take proper interest in the upcoming musicians and constantly emphasise the need for strenuous practise and to develop a commitment to excellence.

It is also often said that to avoid a beaten path and show something new, some musicians present new compositions. Such criticisms are often biased as it can be seen that many such compositions have become very popular with music lovers who demand presentation of these new generation composition in music concerts. It is therefore important to see whether the compositions presented makes a passionate appeal to the emotions. The performing artistes of today should see to it that the new compositions should conform to the standards of emotional appeals.

Significant Style:

Style is an important aspect of music. It is the responsibility of the musician to see that the presentation is made in an attractive manner. The criterion should be quality

of the music not the duration of the concert. The artiste by experience builds a rapport with the audience which in the long run makes his concert appeal to all men at all times.

There is a growing tendency to learn music by certain mechanical means. Musical knowledge to be imparted correctly, however, requires personal attention. The deterioration in the quality is the non-availability of teachers who can really devote time and energy to promote their disciples. The blame for this rests not with the musicians but with the society's lack of appreciation of their problems. Basically, there is no acceptable forum that can take care of their economic conditions and living standards. Only if an artiste has all the comforts to practise his art, can give his best.

Broadcasting music over the Radio and Television and introduction of music in films do help in music reaching out to a wider audience and this helps a larger number of population appreciating the essence of music. A word of caution can only be stated that the music propagated through these means should be of good quality and its aesthetic value should not be compromised for cheap popularity or as a means of commercial exploitation.

Thus, in all the areas enumerated above the role of performing artistes cannot be underestimated.

WOMEN IN THYAGARAJA'S COMPOSITIONS

.... by N.Rajagopalan

The bard of Tiruvaiyaru and the most popular of the classical Karnatak Trinity, Thyagaraja had probably to suffer the agony of witnessing ignominious indiscretions that day to be forced to come out with his most vehement censure in *Menu Juchi mosa bokave* (Sarasangi raga): "Oh Mind! do not get deluded by illusory physical appearances of women. If you

her demise, of Kamalambal and father of his only child, Mahalakshmbal could never think of or stoop to castigate all women but encompasses only those guilty of perversions and ignoble conduct. The warning applies to the voluptuous and the prostitute as well as to men of fickle minds. Thyagaraja reveals his mind, though not in

expression to his dismay at their incapacity to seek Divine Beauty comparing such men to milk-cans that cannot appreciate the taste of milk.

Thyagaraja should have been young when he composed *Meevalla gunadosha memi* (Kapi) wherein while warning against the tendency to shift responsibility for one's own

(In portraying human foibles and failures, he vaces the dire necessity of focussing on the deep maladies that all society with a will to reform it as a true devotee of the foremost "Symbol of Dharmic Conduct", Sri Rama. This is discernible in his well-meaning allusions to the frailties of men and women and his own. He spares himself not, one could see his anger, despair and sympathy in varying degrees in songs like *Emit jesite nemi* (Todi).

could only see through their glamorous exterior, you would see nothing but an amalgam of filth, blood etc, with an alluring cloak on. They carry on their amorous adventures with their eyes which, like sharp weapons, pierce through men's hearts and with their breasts, which like moons, present a resting place for heads".

The poet was sure to have been piqued by some despicable amorous Leelas of a reckless profligate to indent on words alien to his life of a spiritual crusader. Even the name of the raga is an indication of the content and message of the song. The spouse of Parvati and later, on

such biting terms, in other songs as well to retrieve, reform and reclaim minds with marked proclivity for sex that waver as in: *Manasa Sri Ramuni dayaleka* (Mararanjini) wherein he queries whether the mind had got distracted by other women. "Manasu nilpa shaktileka bote (Abhogi)", where he poses the ticklish issue of the efficacy of performing Soma Yagna even as his Dharmapatni (wife) indulges in illicit amours with her paramour and *Enta muddo? Enta sogaso* (Bindumalini), in which he chides pseudo-devotees who stand enslaved by vicious women ensnared by their captivating looks and gives

faults, he queries how a goldsmith could be held culpable for deficiency in purity when the gold given to him is not of the required carat. Then he pens a challenging query—quite a startling one but atrociously correct—"if one's daughter is not able to stand labour pains, why wrongly blame the son-in-law for it? (of course, the prevailing conditions then would have justified the shifting of the blame: but still?) Surely, this song should have been composed before he begot his only child—and that, a daughter!

Missionary

Sains have a mission to advise, warn and reform

community to free it from the clutches of vile emotions, suicidal passions and immoral digressions. Even as the Bard performs this task he wonders in his *Tappi bratiki* (Todi) whether it is possible at all in this Kali Yuga to escape from getting drowned in the treacherous pond of sensualities. One hundred and fifty years have since gone and one could appreciate his rare vision better now. Doordarshan is sufficient proof.

It is relevant here to recall how the noble spouse of Sri Tulasidas thought it fit to reprimand her husband in terms as sharp as those of Thyagaraja: *Such is your infatuation for this body of a female constituted of phlegm, bones and blood! Hadst thou but offered half the love to the Lord, thou wouldst have ascended the very Vaikunta.*

Did not such a realisation descend on Cardinal Wolsey, though too late to save his life from execution by the fickle King of England? Again, but for the virtuous Devadasi Mohanangi, where was the guarantee that Kshetrajna would have reached the pristine heights he did? Thyagaraja's respect for good women finds ample expression in several songs like *Entanine Varnintunu* (Mukhari).

Love poet

That Thyagaraja was harsh on women is a surmise,

a nebulous thought generated by his impregnable image as moralist and stern saint-scholar. But his magnificent opera *Nowka Charitramu* negates such assumption and proves that he is no dry-to-dust moraliser but is equally an eminent "love and romance poet" who could bring out the finest nuances and fragrant graces of Shringara. There is rejuvenating, amaranthine freshness in conception, conjuring description and flamboyant narration full of romantic *tete-a-tete* and niceties.) The verdant opera finds its micro echo in Subramanya Bharathi's titillating song "*Sindhu nadiyinmisai nilavinile*", a song that brings to eternal focus the precious cultural integration of pre-partition India fostered through centuries by men of vision). That "The soul should find rest in no fleshy thought, nor earthly affection" (Waleet Hilton), but should be wedded to ethereal truths and codes of enlightened conduct is the prime theme of the opera Sri Thyagaraja.

As the *rasika* ploughs through absorbing episodes in the opera—Why plough? The *gopis* have no heart to tear themselves apart from Sri Krishna even as the plough has no independent role once separated from mother earth—he is tempted to draw even the extant pictures of Thyagaraja depicting him as a rugged Bhagavata sans exposure to captivating finesse

of Shringara! The remarkable dramatic presentation connotes the transition from olympian objectivity to metaphysical truth after an encounter and ordeal with the treachery of human passions and vagaries.

The *Gopis* of Brindavan kidnap (it is so) the divine child of gorgeous beauty and resplendent charm, Sri Krishna and proceed on a boisterous, amorous boat excursion on river Yamuna to satisfy their emotional egoistic urges. The *Gopis* became victims of successive dominant passions and phantasmal allurements engendered first by one affection and then by another excited and exposed to diverse urges. With feigned innocence, Krishna submits himself to all their guileless but stupid urges and girlish pranks. Nay, he encourages and eggs them run riot with passionate advances, indulgences and overtures. Having allowed them on their path of perdition adequately long, Krishna applies the brake. The boat is caught in a storm and develops leak endangering the lives of all. The distraught *Gopis* are made to part even with their clothes in a bid to plug holes in the boat; all in vain. Brought to senses, they seek at last divine succour which is readily forthcoming. The soul of the *Gopis* is saved. (The boat is the earthy body, the Yamuna symbolises the swaying world of emotions and the storm nothing but individual or

collective whims, fancies and desires).

In this brief action-packed episode, Thyagaraja is meticulous in highlighting the baffling thrusts and turns, Bhavas and Rasa of fast-changing passions and situations with immaculate fitness and impeccable mastery. The titillating moods and Leelas of the Gopis are exquisitely narrated with immense zest. In the action-packed "Super Shringara opeara," to quote T.S.Parthasarathy, the vaggeyakara 'walks on razor's edge to avoid all indiscreet digressions into sensuous references like a master. In this opera, Thyagaraja is seen sailing along with illustrious masters of romanticism, Kshetrajna, Jayadeva and Kalidasa. And he brings out the subtle lessons of spiritual surrender, goal and salvation and the underlying spiritual passion of Gopis by making them cry and pray fervently in "All Kallolamayenamma" (Sowrashtra) thus: Whatever be our fate, Krishna should be saved. We offer our bodies, pray, ensure that Krishna is taken to the shore.' The

surrender of spirit (Atma Nivedana) is total and when Krishna is saved, the Gopis too! (The chosen raga is Sowrashtra as Krishna's abode Dwaraka is in Sowrashtra).

The reference to Nowka Charitramu here is to highlight the fact that in this beautiful opera, Thyagaraja has not a harsh word for Gopis since by no means they could be aligned with the earthy, fleshy coquettes. Though he comes down heavily with shrieks and sparks of poetry against parasites, he extends his warm poetic umbrella and paternal indulgences to the distract ladies of Brindavan whose fault or frailty lay in lack of awareness of the inherent spiritual content of their passionate urges for Sri Krishna. The poet is seen at his best in songs like *T a n a y a n d e Premayanuchu (Bhairavi) and Yenumo Nocitimo (Punnagavarali)* in dealing with romantic delicacies. The Bard's dictum is to be viewed against the best traditions of Bharath. The incidental fact that he had once been harsh on women of depravity does not *ipso facto* lead to a

conclusion or even a premise that he had aversion to the genre. He has given vent to such views in respect of men of poor character too, in law too, an occasional act does not constitute or betray guilt unless it is backed by a guilty mind—*actum non facit reum nisi mens sit rea!* That the great composer had the greatest sympathy and solicitude willing to extend all indulgences to good women is apparent from *Nowka Charitramu*.

A final peep. The indulgence shown by Thyagaraja lies in the secret that he involuntarily joins the team of Gopis and is in the thick of their songs, dances and pranks since he is himself a Gopi at heart seeking the Ultimate. With such transformation in his self, is there cause or occasion to criticise? For a while, he clearly takes leave of the serene supreme moralist, Sri Rama and seeks refuge with the amiable, accommodative new patron, Sri Krishna. He turns a Gopi to enjoy and drink deep the joy and fruits of the boating spree.

(Courtesy: "Yet Another Garland")

Congratulations:



Prof. D. Sarvotham Kamath, a noted disciple of Gurus Prof. U.S. Krishna Rao and late Chandrabhaga Devi, had his advanced training in abhinaya from Dr. K. Venkatalakshamma. He had performed his Rangapravesha in 1978. He is also trained under Dr. Kanak Rele. Besides imparting training in Bharatanatya, Kamath, has choreographed many dance presentations for Doordarshan and public performances. He combines in

himself a melodious singer, a keen researcher and an expert nattuvangist.

A multi-faceted scholar, Sarvotham Kamath has recently taken charge as the Head of the Dance Department of the Dept. of Performing Arts of Bangalore University. Wishing him all success, 'GUNAGRAHI' congratulates him on his elevation.



FROM ABROAD -

MADHURANJINI: To entertain and enlighten

By Nachiketa Sharma

Saturday, 18 March 2000 was a momentous day, for on this day was witnessed the beginning of an organization which had long been discussed and planned - an organization called Madhuranjini. Madhuranjini, with its obvious literal meaning of "that which pleases the heart with honey-sweet ecstasy," is also the melodious name of a Hindustani raga, an association which seemed most appropriate. Madhuranjini will aim to bring to the Bay Area audience, at least initially, an opportunity to experience art in its sublime form, devoid of polemic, scorn, dubious facade, and swagger.

The Debut:

The debut of Madhuranjini took off at our house in Sunnyvale with a performance by my adult students of the Ali Akbar College of Music, where I teach at the Fremont extension. The students did feel that they would not be able to do "well" but after they saw virtue in performing live with tabla in front of a formidable number of people, it dawned on them how important it is to go forth and give it their all. Satish Tare, a newcomer to the Bay Area, was designated to play the tabla. Tare himself is a connoisseur of classical music and was joyous to come to the practice sessions. All students worked very hard.

I started the program with a small thanksgiving to Pt. Basavraj Rajguru, whose framed picture we had placed for everyone to see and which was beautifully adorned by a lovely Ikebana flower arrangement Poonam had made. An agarbatti was lit and it was announced that all this would not even remotely have been possible without the man himself. Gargi Panchangam then started off with the superb Saraswati vandana "Jaya Jaya he Bhagavati Surabharati" in raga Basant. She sang for about five minutes with Satish Tare on the tabla. After Gargi came Poonam Sharma. Poonam sang raga Nand: "AjahUn nahIn Aye" in jhaptal and a tarana in teental.

Vandana Vidwans then sang Yaman Kalyaan "Matavari hUn Aja main," a composition by Dinkar "Dinrang" Kaikini. She was VERY afraid to sing prior to Saturday, that she sang itself is testimony to her confidence. Pramod Korwar sang next. He sang patdeep: "Madhura dhvani Aja suni" and "Jhanana jhanana baajata payala." After Pramod came Janak Pathak. Janak was determined to sing Bihag on Saturday as well and he did: "Lata uljhe sulajhaja balama" and the tarana. I played the harmonium for all of them, admittedly with sub-standard accompanying levels. It was important though because my presence not only emboldened



the students but also comforted them that the performance was no nuclear test of any kind.

The second program:

Saturday, 29 April 2000 witnessed the second Madhuranjini program, this time of my junior students, whose enthusiasm, interest and hard work is very admirable. The atmosphere in all these children's houses is that of constant encouragement and the push to practice to become ever so better. This is living testimony that the role parents play in the nurturing of a child's interest in classical music is paramount. The program began with a Bhagavad Gita shloka by eleven year old Tripti Bhattacharya. It was followed by a bilAval "Murali bakaye bansuri" by nine year old Mihir Sathe. Nine year old Pushkaraj Datar sang next, he presented the beautiful dhrupad-style composition "Ko udara jaga Mayi" in raga Yaman. Kiran Kanekal, age

nine, came on next and sang "Mala kara phire, manava anata phire" in raga Bhairav, an exquisite composition by the one and only Pt. Ramashreya "Ramrang" Jha. The composition highlights the futility of routine chores in the worship of the Almighty without dedication of the mind to Him. Kiran followed it with "Ganapati Gajanana deva" in raga Yaman, again a superb composition by "Ramrang." After Kiran came nine year old Tarun Galagali who sang "Bolo Rama nama" and "Ganapati Gajanana Deva," both in raga Yaman. The former composition is one of the great Vishnu Digambar Paluskar. Tripti Bhattacharya ended the concert with "ko udara jaga mayi" in raga Yaman and the solemn "Manahi mana soche nanda rani" in raga BihAg, a composition by "Ramrang."

In this composition "Ramrang" describes the thoughts of Yashoda who wonders at her own fortune of being the mother of the Lord Himself. Madhuranjini is yet in its infancy but in due course we wish and hope it will be an organization worthy enough of paying tribute to some of the greatest artists who have made life for us richer by many magnitudes.

*Rangoli Foundation
Presents*

RAMAYANA

on July 15 & 16, 2000

Rangoli Foundation presents the ever popular epic story of India 'Ramayana', at two venues:

Saturday, July 15, 00 at 7:00 P.M. at the Los Angeles Theatre Center, 514 S. Spring St, Los Angeles.

Sunday, July 16, 00 at 6:00 P.M. at the Madrid Theatre, 21622 Sherman Way, Canoga Park.

Artistic director, Malathi Iyengar collaborates with an exceptionally talented team of musicians and dancers from India and United States to present 'Ramayana' featuring classical and folk dance styles.

'Ramayana' was originally set to rhyming couplets in the language 'Sanskrit' over 2500 years ago, and was written by the sage-poet Valmiki. This music and dance feature is based on carefully selected verses from Sage Valmiki's 'Srimad Ramayana'. The music composition is by D. S. Srivathsa.

The concert relates the message of 'Ramayana' (powerful story of good over evil) as an instrument to share the precious traditions of India with our audiences. 'Ramayana' tells the story of the courageous and heroic prince 'Rama', and his beautiful princess 'Sita'. The performance will depict their adventures during their fourteen-year exile, the kidnapping of 'Sita', and finally, the Great War waged to recover her from the clutches of the evil demon king 'Ravana'.

Lead dancers include Unnikrishnan, Praveen Kumar, Ronald Burton, M. S. Murthy, Murali Mohan, Lakshmi Iyengar, Malathi

Iyengar, Shyamala Moorthy, Emma Scioli, & Kavita Thirumalai. (The dancers are disciples of well-known teachers from India and United States: Dhananjayans, Guru Narmada, Narasimhachari & Vasanthalakshmi, Dharamshi Shah & Kumudini Lakhia, Ramya Ramnarayan, & Malathi Iyengar).

Orchestra includes Malathi Iyengar - Nattuvanga, Mysore N. Srinath - Vocal, Neela Ramanujam - Vocal, Kalaiarasan - Violin & Jayaram - Flute.

Lighting is by Suresh Iyengar.

General Admission is \$ 12 and \$10 for Students, Seniors, DRC and Art Card Members.

Los Angeles Theatre Center Box Office phone number is 213 485 1681 and Madrid Theatre Box Office phone number is 818 347 9938. For event information, please call 818 380 0858 or 818 788 6860.

Our Web Site address is www.rangoli.org & we can also be reached by E Mail: msiyengar@rangoli.org.

This project is supported in part by a grant from the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Dept and Brody Arts Fund, California Community Foundation.

Both LATC and Madrid Theatres are a facility of the City of Los Angeles, Cultural Affairs Dept.

A dance theatre featuring musicians and dancers from India and USA

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'Ramayana' was originally set to rhyming couplets in the language 'Sanskrit' over 2500 years ago, and was written by the sage-poet 'Valmiki'. Since then, the story has been told, retold and interpreted several times by visual and performing artists. 'Ramayana' is divided into seven 'Kandas' (cantos) or sections and contains 24,000 verses. This music and dance feature is based on selected 'shlokas' or hymns from sage Valmiki's great epic 'Srimad Ramayana'.

The gods in the heavens lived in great terror of Ravana,

the demon who ruled Lanka. To help the gods, Vishnu made his appearance in the world as Rama at the end of 'Treta Yuga' or the second age. The epic focus is on 'Rama', seventh incarnation of god 'Vishnu' and the unchanging values, messages and moral lessons that are represented in 'Ramayana'. Sage Valmiki describes the poetic journey of the central figure, Rama as human, superhuman, and finally divine. In rich and expressive language, Valmiki narrates the legend of Rama, the Ikshvaku prince, who embodies the ideals by which a man, warrior, and a king must live.

Artistic Direction - Malathi Iyengar
Music Composition - D. S. Srivathsa

Poetry - Sage Valmiki's 'Srimad Ramayana'
Lighting - Suresh Iyengar.

Orchestra: Malathi Iyengar - Nattuvanga,
Mysore N. Srinath - Vocal,
Neela Ramanujam - Vocal
Mridanga - Janradhan Rao,
Violin - R. Kalaiarasan,



Flute-K. S. Jayaram.

Dancers: Ronald Burton, Lakshmi Iyengar, Malathi Iyengar, Praveen Kumar, K. Murali Mohan, Shyamala Moorthy, Sathyanarayana Murthy, Emma Scioli, Kavita Thirumalai, & T. B. Unnikrishnan.



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V. Krishnan Page

GUNAGRAHI INDIA

The Cultural People

A look at the cultural scene in India. An Ustad or Pandit gives a concert and the hall is half empty. A large number goes to a well advertised show and the programme is a wash out!

Talented artistes find no avenue to the top. Favouritism, mismanagement and red tape often stifle or shroud brilliance. Artistes piled with paper work, cultural shows earn a din reputation. There is talk of difficulties in getting grants, an insecure feeling amongst artistes, vexing paper work even to get meagre pensions, for, artistes' ignorance and bad public relations are evident, talented artistes are not promoted at the right place at the right time.

The solution: evolution of an impresario system.

GUNAGRAHI INDIA is a vital link between the artistes and the programme sponsors, government agencies, private companies and sabhas, taking on the bullwork that goes into conducting a cultural programme—fixing the venue, getting the right audience, looking after the artistes, taking care of the minor but vital details like aesthetic stage decor, pleasing background music, good compering, lights, living quarters, costumes and seeing to a million organisational details that neither the artiste nor the agency would be competent to handle. To effectively interact with the artistes and sponsors for the success of every cultural programme, **GUNAGRAHI INDIA** offers its services whenever called for.

GUNAGRAHI INDIA is a pioneering project hoping to tremendously improve the quality of the cultural programmes and acceptance of impressario by everybody in the cultural field. It will signify the development of maturity and professionalism that the cultural scene lacks at the moment.

GUNAGRAHI INDIA is a professionally managed impresario company with Dr.M.Surya Prasad, S.K.Lakshminarayana(Babu), K.Ramamurthy Rao, Usha Kamath, Dr.H.N.Shivaprakash and others as Directors, who have considerable and long standing links with various categories of artistes in India.

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--- With best wishes ---

T.D.Rajendra and Nirupama Rajendra

(Dancers-choreographers and teachers)

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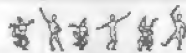
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